



## The Grimble Grapevine June 2015

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Dear friends and family, the last couple of months have been very eventful here in Nepal as you all know. The earthquake affected Kathmandu valley quite significantly, literally flattened many hilly villages in the western and central regions of Nepal and damaged tens of thousands more homes. Almost 9000 have died, about 21,000 injured, and at least 2000 of these people need rehabilitation. Many more are suffering from post-traumatic stress and are in need of counselling. Friends living in Kathmandu still have to put up with regular aftershocks, but thankfully it has been at least a couple of weeks since we felt aftershocks here in Pokhara.



Devastation and newly made temporary shelters...the rubble on the right used to be a school

In the midst of the tragedy, it has been most encouraging to see and hear about the relief work into the villages: INF has been helping to provide relief to some of

the worst affected areas of Gorkha and Dhading with food parcels, hygiene packs, mattresses, tents and materials for temporary shelters. They are doing this through the local Christian community of 45 churches in Pokhara and local Christian organisations, and INF's Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara has been starting to rehabilitate some of the earthquake victims with spinal cord injuries and fractures. I am on standby for helping with the physiotherapy rehabilitation but so far have not been needed! Thank you all of you who have been sending up the prayers and given to the relief effort. <http://www.inf.org/>



Making food parcels at Ramghat church- mountains of rice!

Now INF has an even bigger task: responding to the mid and long term needs of the country following this. One obvious way is of course using our Community Based Rehabilitation knowledge and expertise, so we are now looking at starting work in some of the most affected areas, focusing on advocacy and inclusion of people with disabilities, working with local partner organisations, and training them up in different skills. Our bread and butter work, and oh so needed in times like this!

## Trip to Jumla, mid-west Nepal



Women on their way to cut firewood

As part of my role as Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) physiotherapy advisor, I help to support the INF physiotherapists working in the community. Bishnu (on the right in white) started work for INF in February and is based in Jumla. I spent a week with him there recently, and we spent our days visiting children and adults with disabilities in their homes and running some training on subjects such as



25 degrees, the valleys are full of ripening golden barley, green wheat and fast flowing rivers, and the mountainsides are a mixture of thin strips of bare brown fields and pine forests.

The capital town of Jumla is more like a large village; there is a road connecting Jumla with the rest of the country now but on many sections there is only room for one vehicle, it gets blocked by landslides easily, and one particularly infamous section of it has been named 'death road' for obvious reasons. So don't worry folks, I flew! The villages of mud houses and flat roofs have little to no electricity and many are several hours walk away from the road. The children often look like they need a good wash and a good meal! The main occupations of the villagers seem to be firewood and goats...collecting firewood can take all day, and women carrying huge bundles of firewood on their backs are a common sight. Taking the goats to pastures to graze or brought in to town to be sold is another daily



The 7 seater Goma airplane I took a ride back home



normal child development and how to identify different physical conditions, for the community workers of the local partner disability organisation with INF.

Jumla district is one of the most remote mountainous districts of Nepal, situated in the mid-west of the country. From Pokhara it is a 12 hour bus ride to Nepalgunj and from there a 40 minute flight (when the planes actually come). At this time of the year the temperature is about





activity. The language is quite hard for me to understand-they speak a dialect of Nepali. Slightly pink coloured rice is the speciality food and very tasty 😊 There is a higher prevalence of disability in Jumla compared with the districts in the west of the country, partly due to a combination of reduced access to good healthcare and lower levels of education.

It felt so good to be going into the villages with Bishnu and a community worker from the local disability organisation, bringing our skills and resources with us, and with that, hope for the disabled and their families. On one of our village visits we met Rita (left), a smiley 9 year old with what

appears to be a type of undiagnosed muscular dystrophy. She



has been gradually losing strength in her legs so that now she cannot walk without holding on to something. She is however determined to carry on going to school, a strenuous 15 minute walk up a steep stony path to the top of the hill for an able bodied person. To get there, she either crawls up, often taking her several hours, or is carried by her mother when she has the time to take her. Making her a walker for using around

the village, finding her a child-sized wheelchair for the longer distances, improving access around the house, and getting her enrolled in a school a bit further away but more accessible, are now our goals for her....here she is above in red, walking back from the toilet around the back of the house- a courageous and determined girl!



**How am I feeling?** Good! We have just had our annual INF conference in a beautiful hotel in Pokhara. It was such a restful and relaxing time, with great teaching from the book of Philippians and on prayer. We were reminded to come to God just like little children, just as we are, in our weariness,

helplessness and mess. And to pray expectantly and purposefully, remembering that God loves to give good gifts to His children. Perfect timing for such a message!

**Praise and Prayer.** The CP camp went well, in spite of the earthquake all the families stayed and there was a much deeper sense of unity, both in the therapy team and between the mothers and children. We have recruited a new physio for the CBR work in the West, Shristi (to replace Kalyan), based in Pokhara and started a week ago- so far settling in well. Please pray for her. For recovery of this traumatised nation, for God to work through the suffering, for the new CBR plans for the earthquake response including new Christian staff, forming of disability awareness and inclusion training resources for churches, finalising of the 5 year INF plans with the government, for my training preparation for a 3 week CBR course we are running in Jumla in July (help! all in Nepali!!) and for my housemate Kate and her fiancé Bijay from Nepal who are planning to get married in the summer in Australia - Bijay is still waiting for his visa.

**Thank you all so much for your interest, support and prayers!**

Clare xxx

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Phil 4:6**